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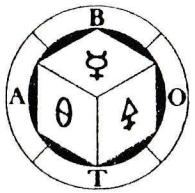
TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

LESSON NO. 6



BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson Six

THE MAGICIAN

From the preceding lesson you learned that the earliest form of the letter Beth was a picture of an arrow-head. The sharpness of an arrow-head suggests acuteness and power to penetrate. Thus Beth is a symbol of the mental qualities of nice perception, keen and penetrating insight, and accurate estimation of values.

The fundamental mood represented by this form of the letter is alert intentness. Right use of the mental powers pictured by the Magician calls for alert, watchful attention to the succession of events constituting waking experience.

No one ever becomes a true magician, a wielder of nature's subtle forces, who permits himself to be preoccupied with his personal, subjective reactions to events. The first requisite is sharp, clear-cut objective awareness of what actually goes on in one's environment.

An arrow-head has no energy of its own. The force whereby it cleaves the mark is a derived force. The arrow is simply the means whereby power is transmitted. An arrow-head is an instrument which transforms propulsion into penetration. It specializes bow-force into arrow-force.

The sound of the letter Beth, like English "B", is a concentrated projection of breath. Hold the palm of your hand near your lips as you say "B". You feel the air strike your hand like an arrow shot from a bow.

Contrast this with the free, unmodified breathing expressed by the sound of Aleph, an almost soundless vibration of air made with the lips open and relaxed. The sound of Aleph is free, indefinite. That of Beth is centralized expulsion of breath through lips almost closed. It points, like the Magician's finger.

The contrast between the two sounds is just one instance of a principle which holds good throughout the sequence of Hebrew letters. Every letter of this alphabet is, in some manner, the antithesis of the letter which immediately precedes it in the series.

Thus we find that the earliest form of Beth agrees with its sound. It expresses force intensified by concentration and projected toward a mark. Transferred to things of the mind, these meanings are related, in a way neither arbitrary nor fanciful, to keen perceptions, alert

awareness of events, and consequent ability to see through superficial appearances into the inner realities veiled by these appearances.

Because the corresponding Tarot Key is numbered 1, it gives a strong hint that it represents the first step in practical work. By determining what you want to be and do, you have taken this first step. You have set a mark at which you aim the whole energy of your life.

Realize that the energy so aimed is derived from the superconscious Life-power pictured as the Fool. In so doing, you will have placed yourself mentally in the position the Magician symbolizes.

He lifts his right hand toward the sky. The right is the stronger hand, and what is meant here is that the act of establishing contact with superconsciousness is the highest and most potent use of self-conscious awareness.

First we observe what goes on. Then we use inductive reasoning, (reasoning from observed effects to inferred principles,) to reveal what lies hidden behind the veil of appearances. This leads to the discovery that the succession of events of which our personal experience is a part is under the direction of a supervising Intelligence higher than the objective mind of man.

Just what in itself this supervising Intelligence may be, we need not ask. We may be very sure it is not the sort of God, made in man's image, whose nature and intentions are set forth in exoteric religious dogmas. An occultist is ready to agree when a professed atheist says, "There is no God", because every occultist knows that there never was such a God as the atheist denies.

On the other hand, every occultist knows what is meant by the saying, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." For any occultist worthy of the name knows that the supervising Intelligence **is** and that it is a **real presence** at every point in space.

The white wand the Magician holds aloft is a phallic symbol. It represents the concentrated, purified nerve force used in occult magic. The ignorant waste this force in uncontrolled gratification of sex-desire. Their lack of control is due to want of knowledge. To master the drive of what analytical psychology calls **libido** requires knowledge not taught in ordinary schools or colleges, and this knowledge must be combined with technical training which develops skill in the direction of desire-force.

Methods for effecting such control vary according to the temperament of the person who employs them. What would be rigid and irksome asceticism for one person may be easy for another. Extreme asceticism is avoided by persons who have learned this fundamental principle. The practice of mental creation and constructive thinking automatically transmutes the drive of the libido from physical forms of expression to mental forms which relieve both physical and psychical pressures, such as accumulate when this energy is not utilized.

This is the crux of the whole matter. The force is generated automatically. It is part physical and part mental. Physical austerity makes it accumulate more slowly and may even help to dissipate it. Yet this is to lose what ought to be used. A true magician links himself to what is higher than man by making right use of the very power which debases his ignorant brother.

Over the head of the Magician is an arbor of roses. An arbor is the simplest kind of shelter, a house made of growing plants. Thus the arbor corresponds to the meaning of the letter-name Beth.

Red roses are emblems of desire. Here they mean that the creative and constructive work of self-consciousness is always motivated by desire for protection against adverse conditions.

The horizontal figure 8 over the Magician's head is a reminder that 8 is the number particularly associated with Hermes or Mercury. It also represents education and culture, traditionally under the patronage of Hermes. Again, 8 is the numeral symbol of the control of natural forces through the application of the law of rhythmic vibration. Such control is an important feature in all works of practical magic. Moreover, a horizontal 8 is the mathematical symbol for infinity, so that it may be taken as an emblem of the limitless Life-power. Finally, it represents the law that opposite effects are produced by identical causes.

The same law which makes iron sink is what ship-builders apply in order to float iron vessels. The law which makes a kite fall to the ground is the law which keeps airplanes aloft. The laws which result in misery, failure, disease and death are the same laws which intelligent adaptation applies to secure comfort, success, health and long life. By changing the method whereby you exercise your subconscious powers, you may produce effects directly opposed to whatever negative experiences you may have suffered in the past.

You do not have to acquire any new powers. You change your life-expression by applying powers which are already yours. You simply learn to use your forces in a different way.

The Magician's left hand points to the ground. His gesture is one of concentration. It is made with the left, or secondary hand, because success in concentration depends on our conscious recognition of the truth that the force we concentrate comes down to us from superconscious levels. The left hand is also a symbol of the habit-mind. Thus the pointing finger of this hand represents habitual concentration, which results from long, **persistent** practice.

The Magician's black hair is a contrast to the Fool's yellow locks. Black stands for darkness, inertia, ignorance. The band surrounding this black hair is white, typifying purity, light, wisdom. Self-consciousness is always an awareness of ignorance. The more we really know, the more clearly do we perceive the immensity of the expanse of what we do not know. Yet we do limit our ignorance by our enlightenment.

The red mantle typifies action and desire. Its color is associated with the planet Mars, said by astrologers to govern reproduction and to preside over the force expressed in every kind of muscular activity.

This mantle has no fastening. It may be removed at will. This detail means that self-consciousness may or may not be involved in physical action, according to our decision in a given circumstance. Yet the Magician is not fully clothed without his mantle. The perfection of self-consciousness is in its control over the various physical manifestations of the Life-power in our bodies, and in the world outside.

On the other hand, self-consciousness may refrain from action and devote itself to contemplating the inner mental states which are symbolized by the white undergarment. The white color refers to truth and wisdom.

The girdle is a blue-green serpent which symbolizes eternity because it swallows its tail. The significance of blue-green will be explained in a subsequent lesson. Observe that the idea of eternity symbolized by the Magician's girdle is in contrast to the idea of time symbolized by the girdle of the Fool.

Before the Magician is a table symbolizing what psychology calls the "field of attention." The table is made of wood grown in the garden. Its columnar legs are surmounted by Ionic capitals in reference to architecture, an art presided over by Hermes. The idea of architecture is directly related to the meaning of the letter Beth.

The Ionic order is shown because it was used in the Ephesian temple of Diana, a moon goddess. In Tarot, the moon is associated with subconsciousness. The intimation here is that the **materials** utilized by self-consciousness are derived from below, from sub-human levels of the Life-power's activity. The **energy** which self-consciousness uses in controlling and arranging these materials is brought down from the level of superconsciousness.

The implements on the table are those employed in ceremonial magic. The wand with a spear-like head is a symbol of will and of the element of fire. The cup, made of silver, metal of the Moon, is a symbol of memory and imagination and of the element of water. The sword, of steel, is related to Mars and stands also for action and for the element of air. The coin or pentacle is related to Saturn and it also represents form and the element of earth. Every magical transformation results from the ability of human self-consciousness to produce varying manifestations of will, imagination, action and physical embodiment.

These four implements represent also what is known in Hermetic Wisdom as the **Power of the Word.** According to occult doctrine, words embody a subtle force not recognized by the uninitiated. Furthermore, there are certain words, special combinations of sounds and ideas, whereby extraordinary results may be produced when such words are correctly pronounced or intoned.

Because the Tarot pictures have been influenced by Hebrew esoteric ideas, there is one particular word which is symbolized by the four magical implements. This is the name of four letters, or Tetragrammaton, IHVH, which is usually written in English as "Jehovah".

This is not the correct pronunciation. Neither are "Yahweh" or "Yahve," the pronunciations just now favored in academic circles. These are no more than guesses at the true sound of this Hebrew name for God. Tradition says the true pronunciation is lost since the final destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. There the High Priest of Israel uttered this dread name in the Holy of Holies once a year during a solemn festival. It should be read letter by letter: Yod(י), Heh (ה), Vav(ו), Heh (ה).

Yod (י) is the wand, Heh (ה) the cup, Vav (ו) the sword, and final Heh (ה) the coin or pentacle. These are the letters dimly shown in the folds at the neck of the Fool's white garment. This supreme Hebrew name for God, used more than six thousand times in the Old Testament, means: **That which was, is, and will be.** In connection with the Magician, it signifies that self-consciousness utilizes the four aspects of a single reality in adapting to its needs the forms and conditions of human experience.

The garden represents the field cultivated by the objective consciousness. This field is subconsciousness. The whole series of events, and all the forms of circumstance, of which we become aware through sensory channels, are events and forms of the activity of subconsciousness. **All that surrounds us is the manifestation of subconscious forces.**

Because the objective mind can control subconscious forces directly, and modify and adapt the rhythms of vibration operating at subconscious levels, a trained occult magician is able to exert by mental means a degree of control over his environment which amazes those of his contemporaries who do not share his knowledge and skill.

Two principal forms of subconscious activity are symbolized by the roses and lilies in the garden. They represent desire and knowledge.

The roses are red, to indicate **active** desire. Five are shown because every desire is rooted in one of the five senses. Every rose also represents the number 5 because all roses have five, or some multiple of five, petals.

5 is the number of adaptation, adjustment and self-consciousness. The special human expression of the Life-power acts by adaptation. Thus 5 is the number of Man . . . and remember that it is Man, and Man **only** who can achieve the full flower of self-consciousness. This great attainment cannot be accomplished by the sub-human and subconscious levels of being. These lower levels are mere averages within the amorphous plasma, or primordial stuff in which the expanding roots of self-consciousness are planted and from which the full bloom of the self-conscious ego emerges.

Thus it is written: "Nature unaided always fails", because this human personal factor is required in order to bring about the perfection of the powers which are only partly expressed in the kingdoms of nature below man.

The lilies are white, to represent abstract perceptions of truth, or knowledge of principles and laws, apart from considerations of desire. They also represent the number 6 because they have six petals.

In its symbolic meaning, 6 represents universal energies like light, heat, electricity and magnetism, chemical forces, and so on. By means of concentration we may perceive the true nature and laws of these forces.

There are four lilies because pure science comprises knowledge of the powers which ancient physics termed fire, water, air and earth. In modern parlance these are: radiant energy, fluids, gases and solids. They are the forms taken by the Word typified by the Magician's four implements.

Summing up the meanings of this Key, we say that self-consciousness is the primary human expression of the Life-power. It constitutes your awareness of your environment, and this is really awareness of mental impressions you receive from the world round you through the channels of sensation. The activities of your environment are manifestations of various powers of subconsciousness, but your intelligent awareness of these manifestations is prerequisite to gaining controls over them.

Self-consciousness is consciousness of being **one**, standing in relation to others. "I am I, and that is not-I." At a higher level of unfoldment, what is usually called "myself", that is, the physical body, is included among the things which are "not-I". Beyond this is a state wherein the personal consciousness is recognized as being, like the physical body, merely an instrument for expressing the superconscious power of the real Self.

In partly developed persons the objective mind creates the illusion that the Self is peculiar to a particular personality—that the personal "self" is a unique identity, separate from all others. Concentration and meditation lead to freedom from this illusion, by enabling us to see that it **is** an illusion. When you come to this recognition, you will no longer think and act as if you were a separate being. Then you will know that your personality is an instrument through which the One Force typified by the Fool finds expression.

Remember, the Life-power works through **your** self-consciousness. Your will, in so far as it really is will and not a delusive shadow, is a specialization of the universal WILL. To know this is to be certain that your true will is irresistible. This establishes confidence in the happy outcome of all your undertakings. It is the only knowledge that can make you truly SELF-reliant, free from the least trace of worry or anxiety and therefore able to give undivided

attention to the experience of the moment. This consciousness enables you to live in the Now, and because in truth it is always Now, this consciousness permits you to live in eternity instead of being time-bound, instead of relating yourself either to the past or to the future.

Every bit of practical training explained in our curriculum aims to aid you in unfolding this consciousness. Until you receive the next lesson, review this one carefully. Make sure you understand every detail of the symbolism of Key 1. This Key is designed to awaken the power of attention. Attention is truly magical. By acts of attention the etheric vibrations of the objects in your environment are concentrated on a brain center. These vibrations have a tendency to organize that center in accordance with the intrinsic nature of the thing to which one attends. Thus the brain center is attuned to the idea which is the inner reality of the thing under observation. This attunement is expressed as conscious perception of that inner reality. Then one sees **through** the form of the thing into its essential nature.

Be alert, then, to the life round you. Use every instrument of sensation to gather accurate information. Resolve to see **into** life instead of merely looking at it. You will find the world transforming itself before your eyes. This is one of the fundamental secrets of magic. Use the Magician daily to sharpen your powers of attention and observation. Mentally assume the position of the Magician, knowing that as you do this, you are giving subconsciousness the positive suggestion that the Self is utilizing your personality as a center of awareness. Thus will you start the process of transferring your sense of identity from the personality to the Higher Self. Now that your Tarot Key is colored, the suggestive impact will be more potent.